

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

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AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMCONSUL ZURICH

AMCONSUL MANDALAY

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

DEA BANGKOK

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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1. NE WIN DEPARTS ON TRIP (CONF)
PRESIDENT NE WIN LEFT RANGOON QUIETLY AUGUST 16 FOR A VISIT TO EUROPE, PROBABLY SWITZERLAND AND ENGLAND. THE AUGUST 17 PAPERS DID NOT REPORT HSS DEPARTURE, BUT IT IS ALREADY FAIRLY WELL KNOWN AROUND TOWN. WE DO NOT YET HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO COMMENT WITH ANY CONFIDENCE ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF THE TRIP, BUT WE FIND IT CURIOUS (THOUGH NOT UNPRECEDENTED THAT HE SHOULD LEAVE AT A TIME OF SO MUCH POLITICAL ACITIVITY AND SO SOON AFTER THE ABORTED COUP PLOT.HE HAD A SLIGHT FLARE-UP OF HIS HEART CONDITION ABOUT A MONTH AGO, AND THE VISIT COULD BE FOR MORE MEDICAL TREATMENT.

2. KYAW ZAW'S DEFECTION (CONF)
GUB AUTHORITIES WERE UNSECESSFUL IN THEIR SEARCH FOR EX-BRIGADIER KYAQ ZAW (SEE ITEM 1, WEEKA #31). ON AUGUST 10, BCP RADIO ANNOUNCED THAT HE IS NOW "IN THE LIBERATED AREA" AND CARRIED A LENGTHY STATEMENT BY HIM DENOUNCING THE REGIME'S MANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY

AND SUPPRESSION OF STUDENTS AND WORKERS, AND CALLING ON THE ARMY AND PEOPLE TO JOIN THE BCP'S ARMED STRUGGLE (TEXT REPORTED BY FBIS). THE BURMESE PRESS CARRIED BRIEFLY BUT FACTUALLY THE STORY OF HIS JOINING THE BCP, AND LATER PRINTED A SPECIAL ARTICLE, "BO KYAW ZAW-WHOM I KNOW," WRITTEN BY EX-COMMUNISTS AND ATTACKING HIM AS A TRAITOR WITH LONGSTANDING COMMUNIST CONNECTIONS.

COMMENT: KYAW ZAW, ONE OF THE "THIRTY COMRADES," ROSE TO PROMINENCE IN THE INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE AND GAINED CONSIDERABLE POPULARITY AS A MILITARY LEADER IN SUBSEQUENT CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE KAREN REBELS AND THE KMT. IN THE EARLY 1950'S HE WAS ONE OF THE TWO OR THREE MOST IMPORTANT BURMA ARMY COMMANDERS AND WAS CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL

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A LIKELY SUCCESSOR TO NE WIN AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. HE WAS LONG KNOWN TO HAVE LEFTIST SYMPATHIES, AND WAS DISMISSED FROM THE ARMY IN 1957 BECAUSE A BCP AGENT STAYING IN HIS HOUSE STOLE SOME CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS. HE WAS ACCUSED OF AIDING THE BCP, BUT HE WAS NOT BROUGHT TO TRIAL ON THE CHARGES AND IT WAS NEVER ESTABLISHED THAT HE WAS KNOWINGLY INVOLVED IN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITES. BETWEEN 1957 AND 1962, HE PARTICIPATED IN LEFTIST POLITICAL MOVE-

MENTS AND ONCE RAN UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR PARLIAMENT; BUT SINCE THAT TIME HE HAS BEEN LIVING QUIETLY IN RANGOON. KYAW ZAW IS THE BEST KNOWN AND HIGHEST RANKING BURMESE TO HAVE JOINED THE BCP IN RECENT YEARS, AND HIS DEFECTION SHOULD GIVE THE BCP A PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST. HOWEVER, WE DOUBT THAT IT WILL RESULT IN SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED SUPPORT FOR THE COMMUNISTS WITHIN THE ARMY OR ELSEWHERE.

3. SEMINAR ON BOMB VICTIMS' TREATMENT (LOU)

FOLLOWING THE UNUSUALLY HIGH NUMBER OF GRENADE INCIDENTS THE WEEK BEFORE LAST (REPORTED IN WEEKA #31), CIVIL SURGEONS AND MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENTS FROM ALL HOSPITALS IN RANGOON WERE ASSEMBLED AUGUST 13 FOR A SPECIAL SEMINAR ON THE TREATMENT OF BOMB BLAST VICTIMS. MILITARY OFFICERS TOLD THE SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS THAT THEY EXPECT MORE SUCH INCIDENTS IN RANGOON AND OTHER LARGE CITIES.

4. MALAYSIAN PREMIER VISITS (LOU)

MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER DATUK HUSSEIN ONN VISITED RANGOON AUGUST 13-15 ON HIS WAY TO THE COLOMBO NAM SUMMIT. HE MET WITH PRESIDENT NE WIN, PRIME MINISTER SEIN WIN, AND OTHER RANKING GUB OFFICIALS.

COMMENT: THERE WERE SEVERAL PROTOCOL FUNCTIONS, AND THE PRIME MINISTERS PLAYED TWO ROUNDS OF GOLF, BUT WE HAVE

NOT YET LEARNED WHAT SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS MAY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED. THERE ARE NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT ONLY NAM-RELATED ISSUES AND REGIONAL MATTERS SUCH AS THE RECENT PHAN HIEN SEA TRIP WERE CONSIDERED. THE VISIT WAS IN FULFILLMENT OF A SCHEDULED VISIT BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER
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RAZAK WHICH WAS CANCELLED BECAUSE OF HIS DEATH.

5. LAO PRESIDENT STOPS OVER (UNCL)

LAO PRESIDENT SOUPHANOUVONG AND PARTY STOPPED OVER FOR AN HOUR IN RANGOON AUGUST 14 ON THE WAY TO COLOMBO. THEY WERE MET AT THE AIRPORT BY PRIME MINISTER SEIN WIN AND OTHER GUB OFFICIALS.

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6. PRIME MINISTER TO COLOMBO (UNCL)

PRIME MINISTER SEIN WIN DEPARTED AUGUST 15 FOR THE COLOMBO NAM SUMMIT MEETING. HE HEADS AN 18-MEMBER DELEGATION WHICH INCLUDES FOREIGN MINISTER HLA PHONE AS WELL AS OTHER SENIOR MOFA AND BSPP OFFICIALS.

7. NARCOTICS: SEIZURES AND ARRESTS (UNCL)

IN SEVEN SEPARATE ACTIONS IN SEVEN COMMUNITIES, 15 OFFENDERS WERE ARRESTED FOR VIOLATION OF THE DRUG LAW DURING THE PAST WEEK. OVER 27 KILOGRAMS (ESTIMATED
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VALUE: K. 40,500) OF RAW OPIUM AND APPROXIMATELY K. 80,000 WORTH OF HEROIN WERE SEIZED.

8. SALT DECONTROLLED (LOU)

EFFECTIVE AUGUST 14 GUB DECONTROLLED SALT, WHICH HAD BEEN A CONTROLLED COMMODITY IN BURMA -- MEANING IT COULD ONLY BE PURCHASED FROM THE PRODUCER, TRANSPORTED, AND SOLD TO THE CONSUMER UNDER GOVERNMENT AUSPICES. A GUB TRADE NOTIFICATION STATES THAT ANY PERSON CAN FREELY BUY OR SELL WHOLESALE OR RETAIL, MOVE, STORE, GRIND, REFINED AND TRANSFER SALT. THIS ACT PLACES ALL TRANSACTIONS IN THIS ESSENTIAL COMMODITY IN THE HANDS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

COMMENT: THERE HAVE BEEN SERIOUS SHORTAGES OF SALT IN UPPER BURMA, AND THIS ACT IS INTENDED TO ALLEVIATE THESE SHORTAGES BY ALLOWING THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO TRANSPORT AND DISTRIBUTE THE COMMODITY, SOMETHING THE GUB TRADE CORPORATIONS WERE UNABLE TO DO EFFICIENTLY.

9. MORE TOURISTS TO BURMA (UNCL)

ACCORDING TO THE GUB IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT, 9,600 TOURISTS VISITED BURMA DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1976 AS COMPARED WITH 7,955 TOURIST ARRIVALS DURING THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR. TOURIST ARRIVALS IN 1975 TOTALLED 17,312, ABOUT 1,500 BELOW THE PEAK YEAR OF 1973. AS THE FIGURES INDICATE, BURMA'S TOURIST INDUSTRY REMAINS VERY SMALL, BUT PRESENT FACILITIES, E.G. HOTEL AND TRANSPORT, WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO ACCOMMODATE LARGER NUMBERS.

10. LAST AMERICAN MISSIONARIES LEAVE (UNCL)

THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY PRESENCE IN BURMA, WHICH BEGAN WITH THE ARRIVAL OF ANN AND ADONIRAM JUDSON ON JULY 13, 1813, AND INCLUDED SUCH A WELL KNOWN NAME AS GORDON SEAGRAVE, ENDED ON AUGUST 12 WITH THE DEPARTURE OF FATHERS CHARLES GENDRON AND JOHN BLUM, THE LAST TWO AMERICAN MISSIONARIES IN BURMA. UNLESS THERE IS A CHANGE IN GUB POLICY, NO AMERICAN MISSIONARIES WILL BE ALLOWED TO RESIDE IN BURMA IN THE FUTURE.

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